THE FIFTH DAY.

27th February 1920.

The Assembly met at 12-10 P. M., on Friday, the 27th February 1920.

44. The Village Panchayat Court and its development.

Mr. S. Padmanabha Iyer (Member, T. I. C., Neyyattinkara) spoke about the Panchayat Courts in Vedic and pre-British days and observed that they were not an innovation. What was required was to select convenient centres and open courts in such centres, so that the people might derive the utmost benefit from them. In the first place, the limits of the courts which were co-existent with the boundaries of the Town Improvement Committees should be enlarged, or more courts must be started in convenient centres. For, under the present arrangements of territorial jurisdiction, the area of each Panchayat Court was too small and there was not enough work for a court. It was also desirable that the pecuniary jurisdiction of courts should be raised. The personnel of the Panchayat Courts stood in urgent need of revision. At present some of the judges had no legal knowledge. The Member's suggestion was that the power of selecting judges should be taken away from the Revenue authorities and entrusted to the District Judges who should appoint the members of Panchayat Courts in consultation with the local Munsiff. In course of time the judges of Panchayat Courts should be elected by the people. Criminal Jurisdiction in petty cases might also be given to the Panchayat Courts, the maximum fine leviable being fixed at Rs. 5. Steps should be taken to relieve Government of the financial burden caused by the institution of Panchayat Courts. Lastly, efficiency should not be sacrificed to communal representation and any one appointed as judge should have a fair knowledge of English, Malayalam and Tamil.

Dewan's reply.—In regard to the appointment of judges of the Panchayat Courts, the policy of Government is to select leaders of the bar, wherever possible. The other points are noted.

45. Establishment of two Panchayat Courts, one at Mararikulam midway between Shertallay and Alleppey, and the other at Eramalloor near the northern extremity of Shertallay.

Mr. Vinamsi Thomas (Member, Shertallay taluk) submitted that, on account of the difficulties experienced by the litigant public for want of adequate means of locomotion, two Panchayat Courts—one at Mararikulam and the other at Eramalloor—might be established in the taluk.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

46. Necessity for the transfer of the appellate jurisdiction of the Munsiff's Court at Vaikom from the Parur, to the Kottayam or Alleppey, District Court.

Mr. K. N. Govinda Pillai (Member, T. I. C., Vaikom) represented that the appellate jurisdiction of the Vaikom Munsiff's Court had been vested in the Alleppey District Court, that, subsequently in 1078, it was transferred to the Parur District Court probably because the Parur Court had not sufficient work, that the matter having been again brought to the notice of Government, the jurisdiction was re-transferred to Alleppey in 1080, and that, later on, the old order of things was restored, thus subjecting the people of Vaikom to great hardships and inconveniences. The distance from Vaikom to Alleppey was 20 miles, to Kottayam 18 miles and to Parur 40 miles. The time taken for reaching Alleppey, Kottayam and Parur from Vaikom and the cost of travel were then compared and the Member submitted that, from

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